# Deleuze Identity Politics K

## Shell

### 1NC

#### The 1AC uses “identity politics” to shape identity based on stability, authenticity, solidarity, and victimization. This fails and perpetuates racial stereotypes

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Identity ceases to be an ongoing process of self-making and social interaction. It becomes instead a thing to be possessed and displayed. It is a silent sign that closes down the possibility of communication across the gulf between one heavily defended island of particularity and its equally well fortified neighbors, between one national encampment and others. When identity refers to an indelible mark or code somehow written into the bodies of its carriers, otherness can only be a threat. Identity is latent destiny. Seen or unseen, on the surface of the body or buried deep in its cells, identity forever sets one group apart from others who lack the particular, chosen traits that become the basis of typology and comparative evaluation. No longer a site for the affirmation of subjectivity and autonomy, identity mutates. Its motion reveals a deep desire for mechanical solidarity, seriality, and hypersimilarity. The scope for individual agency dwindles and then disappears. People become bearers of the differences that the rhetoric of absolute identity invents and then invites them to celebrate. Rather than communicating and making choices, individuals are seen as obedient, silent passengers moving across a flattened moral landscape toward the fixed destinies to which their essential identities, their genes, and the closed cultures they create have consigned them once and for all. And yet, the desire to fix identity in the body is inevitably frustrated by the body's refusal to disclose the required signs of absolute incompati¬bility people imagine to be located there. Numerous cross-cultural examples might be used to illustrate this point. Reports from the genocide in Rwanda repeatedly revealed that identity cards issued by the political authorities were a vital source of the information necessary to classify people into the supposedly natural "tribal" types that brought them either death or deliverance. There, as in several other well-documented instances of mass slaughter, the bodies in question did not freely disclose the secrets of identity: Many Tutsis have been killed either because their ID cards marked them out as a Tutsi or because they did not have their card with them at the time and were therefore unable to prove they were not a Tutsi . . . To escape the relentless discrimination they suffered, over the years many Tutsis bribed local government officials to get their ID card changed to Hutu. Unfortunately, this has not protected them . . . The Tutsi give-aways were: one, being tall and two having a straight nose. Such criteria even led hysterical militias to kill a number of Hutus whose crime was "being too tall for a Hutu." Where there was doubt about the person's physical characteristics or because of the complaints that too many Tutsis had changed their card, the Interahamwe called upon villagers to verify the "tutsiship" of the quarry in question.6 Similar events were still being reported four years later when the genocidal assault against the Tutsis had been rearticulated into the civil war in Congo—a conflict that had already drawn in several other states and that appeared to provide the key to stability in the region. Under the presidency of Laurent Kabila, people whose physical characteristics made them sus¬pect were still being openly murdered! It is important to remember, how-ever, that the linguistic markers of residual colonial conflict between anglophone and francophone spheres of influence were also implicated in sustaining the killing. These fragments from a history of unspeakable barbarity underline how the notion of fixed identity operates easily on both sides of the chasm that usually divides scholarly writing from the disorderly world of political conflicts. Recently, identity has also come to constitute something of a bridge between the often discrepant approaches to understanding self and sociality found on the different sides of that widening gulf. As a theme in contemporary scholarship, identity has offered academic thinking an irn-, portant route back toward the struggles and uncertainties of everyday life, where the idea of identity has become especially resonant. It has also pro-vided the distinctive signatures of an inward, implosive turn that brings the difficult tasks of politics to an end by making them appear irrelevant in the face of deeper, more fundamental powers that regulate human conduct irrespective of governmental superficialities. If identity and difference are fundamental, then they are not amenable to being re-tooled by crude po¬litical methods that cannot possibly get to the heart of primal ontologies, destinies, and fates. When the stakes are this high, nothing can be done to offset the catastrophic consequences that result from tolerating difference and mistaken attempts at practicing demoracy. Difference corrupts and compromises identity. Encounters with it are just as unwelcome and po¬tentially destructive as they were for Houston Stewart Chamberlain. They place that most precious commodity, rooted identity, in grave jeopardy. When national and ethnic identities are represented and projected as pure, exposure to difference threatens them with dilution and compro¬mises their prized purities with the ever-present possibility of contamina¬tion. Crossing as mixture and movement must be guarded against. New hatreds and violence arise not, as they did in the past, from supposedly re¬liable anthropological knowledge of the identity and difference of the Other but from the novel problem of not being able. to-locate the Other's difference in the common-sense lexicon of alterity. Different people are certainly hated and feared, but the timely antipathy against them is noth¬ing compared with the hatreds turned toward the greater menace of the half-different and the partially familiar. To have mixed is to have been party to a great betrayal. Any unsettling traces of hybridity must be excised from the tidy, bleached-out zones of impossibly pure culture. The safety of sameness can then be recovered by either of the two options that have reg¬ularly appeared at the meltdown point of this dismal logic: separation and slaughter. IDENTITY, SOLIDARITY, AND SELFHOOD The political language of identity levels out distinctions between chosen connections and given particularities: between the person you choose to be and the things that determine your individuality by being thrust upon you. It is particularly important for the argument that follows that the term "identity" has become a significant element in contemporary conflicts over cultural, ethnic, religious, "racial," and national differences. The idea of collective identity has emerged as an object of political thinking even if its appearance signals a sorry state of affairs in which the distinctive rules that define modern political culture are consciously set aside in favor of the pursuit of primordial feelings and mythic varieties of kinship that are mis-takenly believed to be more profound. At the same time, individual iden¬tity, the counterpart to the collective, is constantly negotiated, cultivated, and protected as a source of pleasure, power, wealth, and potential danger. That identity is increasingly shaped in the marketplace, modified by the cultural industries, and managed and orchestrated in localized institutions and settings like schools, neighborhoods, and workplaces. It can be in¬scribed in the dull public world of official politics where issues surrounding the absence of collective identity—and the resulting disappearance of community and solidarity from social life—have also been discussed at great length by politicians on different sides of the political divide. Other aspects of identity's foundational slipperiness can be detected in the way that the term is used to register the impact of processes that take place above and below the level at which the sovereign state and its dis¬tinctive modes of belonging are constituted. The growth of nationalisms and other absolutist religious and ethnic identities, the accentuation of re¬gional and local divisions, and the changing relationship between supra-national and subnational networks of economy, politics, and information have all endowed contemporary appeals to identity with extra significance. Identity has come to supply something of an anchor amid the turbulent waters of de-industrialization and the large-scale patterns of planetary re¬construction that are hesitantly named "globalization."' It would appear that recovering or possessing an appropriately grounded identity can pro¬vide a means to hold these historic but anxiety-inducing processes at bay. Taking pride or finding sanctuary in an exclusive identity affords a means to acquire certainty about who one is and where one fits, about the claims of community and-the limits of social obligation. The politkization of gender and sexuality has enhanced the under-standing of identity by directing attention to the social, familial, historical, and cultural factors that bear upon the formation and social reproduction of masculinity and femininity. Two groups of agents are bound together by the centripetal force of the stable, gendered identities that they appar¬ently hold in common. But the anxious, disciplinary intensity with which these ideas are entrenched seems to increase in inverse proportion to the collapse of family and household structures and the eclipse of male domes¬tic domination. In these important areas, the concept of identity has nur¬tured new ways of thinking about the self, about sameness, and about solidarity. If abstract identity and its thematics are on the verge of becom¬ing something of an obsessive preoccupation in the overdeveloped coun-. tries, this novel pattern communicates how political movements and governmental activities are being reconstituted by a change in the status and capacity of the nation-state.' This transformation also reveals something important about the work¬ings of consumer society.° The car you drive and the brand of clothing or sports shoes that you wear may no longer be thought of as accidental or contingent expressions of the arts of everyday life and the material con¬straints that stem from widening inequalities of status and wealth. Branded commodities acquire an additional burden when they are imag¬ined to represent the private inner truths of individual existence or to fix the boundary of communal sensibilities that have faded from other areas of public or civic interaction. Though it involves some over-simplification, we can begin to unpack the idea of identity s4 that it reveals-several overlapping and interconnected problems that are regularly entangled in the more routine contemporary uses of the term. The first of these is the un-derstanding of identity as subjectivity. Religious and spiritual obligations around selfhood were gradually assimilated into the secular, modern goal of an ordered self operating in an orderly polity.11 This historic combina¬tion was supplemented by the idea that the stability and coherence of the self was a precondition for authoritative and reliable truth-seeking activity. That idea has itself been queried as truth has emerged as something provi¬sional and perspectival that is seldom amenable to the application of placeless, universal laws. The forms of uncertainty that characterize our more skeptical time still emphasize the perils that flow from the lack of a particular variety of self-consciousness and self-cultivation. When subjectivity is placed in command of its own mechanisms and desires, a heavy investment is made in the idea of identity and the lan¬guages of self through which it has been projected. The demise of the cer-tainties associated with religious approaches to understanding oneself and locating oneself in a properly moral relationship to other selves endowed with the same ethical and cognitive attributes has had lasting conse¬quences. The idea of a pre-given, internal identity that regulates social conduct beyond the grasp of conscious reflection has been valuable in re¬storing elements of increasingly rare and precious certainty to a situation in which doubt and anxiety have become routine. It has also been closely associated with the consolidation of a genomic raciology that promotes forms of resignation in which-we are encouraged to do nothing while we wait for those decisive natural differences to announce their presence. These specifications are contradicted by the effects of technological accel¬eration arising from digital processing and computer-mediated communi¬cations. They mean that individual identity is even less constrained by the immediate forms of physical presence established by the body. The boundaries of self need no longer terminate at the threshold of the skin." The distance that an individual identity can travel toward others and, via technological instruments, become present to them has increased and the quality of that interaction has been transformed by a culture of simula¬tion that has grown up around it. No longer finding uniformity and una¬nimity in symbols worn on or around the body, like the black shirt, the fascistic political identity cultivated by today's ultranationalist and white supremacist groups can be constituted remotely and transnationally over the Internet through computerized resources like the Aryan Crusader's Library, an on-line networking operation run from the United States but offered worldwide to anyone with a computer and a modem. Govern¬ments and corporations are promoting these technological resources as en¬gines of modernized commerce and tools of democracy, but access to them is sharply skewed by poverty, inequality, and a variety of cultural and polit¬ical factors." That does not, however, mean that the cultural processes they animate and encourage remain confined to the privileged layers where they are most obviously apparent. They can be situated in their wider so¬cial setting: In the story of constructing identity in the culture of simulation, ex-periences on the Internet figure prominently, but these experiences can only be understood as part of a larger cultural context. That context is the story of eroding boundaries between the real and the virtual, the animate and the inanimate, the unitary and the multiple self, which is occurring both in advanced fields of scientific research and in the patterns of everyday life. From scientists trying to create artificial life, to children "morphing" through a series of virtual per-sonae, we shall see evidence of fundamental shifts in the way we create and experience human identity.'4 This uncertain, outward movement, from the anxious body-bound self toward the world, leads us to a second set of difficulties in the field of iden¬tity. This is the problem of sameness understood here as intersubjectivity. Considering identity from this angle requires recognition of the concept's role in calculations over precisely what counts as the same and what as dif¬ferent. This in turn raises the further question of recognition and its re¬fusal in constituting identity and soliciting identification. The theme of identification and the consequent relationship between sociology, psy¬chology, and even psychoanalysis enter here and add layers of complexity to deliberations about how selves—and their identities—are formed through relationships of exteriority, conflict, and exclusion. Differences can be found within identities as well as between them. The Other, against whose resistance the integrity of an identity is to be established, can be rec¬ognized as part of the self that is no longer plausibly understood as a uni¬tary entity but appears instead as one fragile. moment- in -the dialogic circuits that Debbora Battaglia has usefully called a "representational economy 7): . . . there is no selfhood apart from the collaborative practice of its figuration. The "self' is a representational economy: a reification continually defeated by mutable entanglements with other subjects' histories, experiences, self-representations; with their texts; con¬duct, gestures, objectifications." Building on this insight, the argument below takes shape around a third line of questioning: How does the concept of identity provide a means to speak about social and political solidarity? How is the term "identity" in¬voked in the summoning and binding of individual agents into groups that become social actors? For these purposes, considering identity requires a confrontation with the specific ideas of ethnic, racialized, and national identity and their civic counterparts. This departure introduces a duster of distinctively modern notions that, in conjunction with discourses of citi¬zenship, have actively produced rather than given a secondary expression to forms of solidarity with unprecedented power to mobilize mass move¬ments and animate large-scale constituencies. The full power of commu¬nicative technologies like radio, sound recording, film, and television has been employed to create forms of solidarity and national consciousness that propelled the idea of belonging far beyond anything that had been achieved in the nineteenth century by the industrialization of print and the formalization of national languages." Contemporary conflicts over the status of national identity provide the best examples here. To return to the South African case for a moment, Nelson Mandela's historic inaugural speech as State President illustrated both the malleability of nationalist sentiment and some of the enduring tensions around its radical constitution. Working to produce an alternative content for the new nonracial, postracial, or perhaps antiracial political identity that might draw together the citizenry of the reborn country on a new basis beyond the grasp of racializing codes and fantasies of favored life as a people chosen by God, President Mandela turned to the land—common ground—beneath the feet of his diverse, unified, and mutually suspicious audience. Significantly, he spoke not only of the soil but of the beauty of the country and offered the idea of a common relationship to both the cultivated and the natural beauty of the land as elements of a new beginning. This, for him, was the key to awakening truly democratic con¬sciousness. A transformed relationship between body and environment would transcend the irrelevancies of Apartheid South Africa's redundant racial hierarchies: To my compatriots, I have no hesitation in saying that each one of us is as intimately attached to the soil of this beautiful country as are the famous jacaranda trees of Pretoria and the mimosa trees of the bushveld. Each time one of us touches the soil of this land, we feel a sense of personal renewal . . . That spiritual and physical oneness we all share with this common homeland explains the depth of pain we all car-ried in our hearts as we saw our country tear itself apart in a terrible conflict.'? Whether these laudable claims were a plausible part of rebuilding- South-African nationality remains to be seen. What is more significant for our purposes is that territory and indeed nature itself are being engaged as a means to define citizenship and the forms of rootedness that compose na¬tional solidarity and cohesion. President Mandela's words were powerful because they work with the organicity that nature has bequeathed to mod¬ern ideas of culture. In that blur, Mandela constructed an ecological ac¬count of the relationship between shared humanity, common citizenship, place, and identity. The speech subverted traditional assumptions with its implication that Apartheid was a brutal violation of nature that could be repaired only if people were prepared to pay heed to the oneness estab¬lished by their connection to the beautiful environment they share and hold in common stewardship. The alternative argument set out below recognizes the socioecological dynamics of identity-formation. However, it asks you to consider what might be gained if the powerful claims of soil, roots, and territory could be set aside. You are invited to view them in the light of other possibilities that have sometimes defined themselves against the forms of solidarity sanctioned by the territorial regimes of the nation-state. We will see that the idea of movement can provide an alternative to the sedentary poetics of either soil or blood. Both communicative technology and older patterns of itinerancy ignored by the human sciences can be used to articulate placeless imaginings of identity as well as new bases for solidanty and syn chronized action. With these possibilities in mind, I want to suggest that considering the de-territorialized history of the modern African diaspora into the western hemisphere and the racial slavery through which it was accomplished has something useful to teach us about the workings of identity and identification and, beyond that, something valuable to impart about the claims of nationality and the nation-state upon the writing of history itself. Shut out from literacy on the pain of death, slaves taken from Africa by force used the same biblical narratives we have already encountered to comprehend their situation and, slowly and at great emotional cost, to build what might be understood as a new set of identities. They, too, imagined themselves to be a divinely chosen people. This meant that the suffering visited upon their proto-nations in bondage was purposive and their pain was oriented, not merely toward heavenly freedom, but toward the moral redemption of anyone prepared to join them in the just cause of seeking political liberty and individual autonomy. These themes are no¬where more powerfully articulated than in the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. Writing amid the conflicts of the 1960s that would eventually claim his life, about the difficulties experienced by black Americans whose allegiance to America was broken by their lack of political rights and eco¬nomic opportunities, he had the following to say about what we would now recognize as identity. (He, too, mobilized the biblical mythology of the chosen people to articulate his political choices and hopes): Something of the spirit of our slave forebears must be pursued today. From the inner depths of our being we must sing with them: "Before I'll be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave and go home to my Lord and be free." This spirit, this drive, this rugged sense of somebodyness is the first and vital step that the Negro must take in dealing with his dilemma . . . To overcome this tragic conflict, it will be necessary for the Negro to find a new self-image . . . The Pharaohs had a favorite and effective strategy to keep their slaves in bondage: keep them fighting among themselves . . . But when slaves unite, the Red Seas of history open and the Egypts of slavery crumble.18 We must be cautious because there are now considerable political gains to be made from being recognized as possessing an identity defined exclusively by this and other histories of ineffable suffering. Dr. King did not exploit that association, but those who followed in his wake have not always been so scrupulous. The identity of the victim, sealed off and pre¬sented as an essential, unchanging state, has become, in the years since his murder, a prized acquisition not least where financial calculations have sought to transform historic wrongs into compensatory monies.19 This problem has not been confined to black politics with its demands for repa¬rations and other forms of financial restitution for slavery in the Americas. From Palestine to Bosnia, the image of the victim has become useful in all sorts of dubious maneuverings that can obscure the moral and political questions arising from demands for justice. And yet, for all its pragmatic or strategic attractions, the role of the victim has its drawbacks as the basis of any political identity. With characteristic insight, James Baldwin de¬scribed some of them in a discussion of the meaning of racial terror and its impact upon identity: I refuse, absolutely, to speak from the point of view of the victim. The victim Can have no point of view for precisely so long as he thinks of himself as a victim. The testimony of the victim as victim corroborates, simply, the reality of the chains that bind him—confirms, and, as it were consoles the jailer." Baldwin cautions us against closing the gap between identity and politics and playing down the complexities of their interconnection. His words locate the trap involved in hoping that what is lazily imagined to be shared identity might be straightforwardly transferred into the political arena. With his help we can apprehend the many dangers involved in vac¬uous "me too-ism" or some other equally pointless and immoral competi¬tion over which peoples, nations, populations, or ethnic groups have suffered the most; over whose identities have been most severely damaged; and indeed over who might be thought of as the most de-racinated, nomadic, or cosmopolitan and therefore more essentially "modern" or paradigmatically "postmodern" peoples on our planet. However, with Baldwin's warning still in mind, there is much to be learned by fore-grounding that experience of being victimized and using it to challenge the willful innocence of some Europe-centered accounts of modernity's pleasures and problems. That difficult operation yields more than a coda to the conventional historical and sociological stories-of-modern develop ment. Perhaps a changed sense of what it means to be a modern person might result from this reassessment? The careful reconstruction of those half-hidden, tragic narratives that demonstrate how the fateful belief in mutually impermeable, religious, ra¬cial, national, and ethnic identities was assembled and reproduced was briefly addressed in the previous chapter. It fits in well with the archaeo¬logical work already being done to account for the complex cultures and societies of the New World and their relationship to the history of Euro¬pean thought, literature, and self-understanding.21 The significance of colony and empire is also being reevaluated and the boundaries around European nation-states are emerging as more porous and leakier than some architects of complacently national history would want to admit. These discoveries support the demand for a decisive change of standpoint. Again it seems that to comprehend the bleak histories of colonial and im¬perial power that besmirch the clean edifice of innocent modernity and query the heroic story of universal reason's triumphal march, we must shift away from the historiographical scale defined by the closed borders of the nation-state. If we are prepared to possess those histories and consider setting them to work in divining more modest and more plausible under¬standings of democracy, tolerance for difference, and cross-cultural recog¬nition than currently exist, this historical argument can redirect attention toward some of the more general contemporary questions involved in thinking about identity in the human sciences. Histories of the violence and terror with which modern rationality has been complicit offer a useful means to test and qualify the explanatory power of theories of identity and culture that have arisen in quieter, less bloody circumstances. Perhaps those theories also derive from the more complacent scholarly ways of thinking about power common to temperate climes. The idea that possessing a particular identity should be a precondition or qualification for engaging in this kind of work is trivial. The intellectual challenge defined here is that histories of suffering should not be allocated exclusively to their victims. If they were, the memory of the trauma would disappear as the living memory of it died away. This proposed change of perspective about the value of suffering is not then exclusively of interest to its victims and any kin who remember them. Because it is a matter of justice, it is not just an issue for the wronged "mi-norities" whose own lost or fading identities may be restored or rescued by the practice of commemoration. It is also of concern to those who may have benefited directly and indirectly from the rational application of irra¬tionality and barbarity. Perhaps above all, this attempt to reconceptualize modernity so that it encompasses these possibilities is relevant to the ma¬jority who are unlikely to count themselves as affiliated with either of the principal groups: victims and perpetrators. This difficult stance challenges that unnamed group to witness sufferings that pass beyond the reach of words and, in so doing, to see how an understanding of one's own particu¬larity or identity might be transformed as a result of a principled exposure to the claims of otherness.22

#### A ballot based on identity can't 'fix' debate

Gilbert Et Al 2008 (Jeremy Gilbert, Éric Alliez, Claire Colebrook, Peter Hallward, Nicholas Thoburn - all have PhDs and whatever; "Deleuzian Politics? A Roundtable Discussion"; New Formations)

Claire: If you think about contemporary politics: all we have to do is move from talking about national liberation movements and workers' movements to looking at some of the most tortured and vexed political situations, such as the relationship between indigenous Australian communities and European settled communities, and we can see that as long as we have a notion of collectivity that's founded on the traditional notion of labour and its organisation, then we will always be necessarily disenfranchising and robbing those people of a potential form of individuation. This is what this is all about. The key question is how you can take part in some form of collective action without necessarily being identified as or appealing to 'classes' in the old sense. So the 'molecularisation' of politics which Deleuze and Guattari propose is about how to get beyond a situation in which, within a given context of communication, there are things that can't be heard. The question is: how can you have some maximum degree of inclusion with a minimal degree of identification? This is a crucial question if you want a global politics which can allow for notions of contamination, and which can get beyond the limitations of models of politics modelled on opposed pairs of identities: workers vs. capitalists, national liberation struggles vs globalist struggles. You can't have that anymore: you can only have these extremely molecular, local, individuating political gestures. Peter: Well it depends on the situation. There are contexts where something like an indigenous mobilisation verging on identity politics, grounded in an indigenous tradition - as in parts of Bolivia and parts of Guatemala, and other places - has been politically significant and is today politically significant. The same applies to contemporary forms of class struggle. Of course things are changing all the time, but the basic logic of class struggle hasn't changed that much over time: the dynamics of exploitation and domination at issue today are all too familiar, and remain a major factor in most if not all contemporary political situations. Claire: That's why the model of political engagement needs to be re-thought, why in a Deleuzian register one always refers to a 'becoming-x' . Because yes, there is a strategic need for molar or identifiable movements. But if they start to think 'OK - this is our movement, this is what we are identified as, and this is the only way it's going to work', then apart from the philosophical problems of identity that run there, such a movement is also going to destroy itself precisely by being identified and stable. The only way a transformatory political project is going to work is if it has a notion of redefinition that is inbuilt.

#### Your coalitions argument is outdated – the political action you want cant come from the ballot and only causes error replication.

Lenco 08 [Peter Lenco Faculty of Sociology Bielefeld University Philosophy, Politics, Resistance Gilles Deleuze And Global Social Justice Presented At The Conference Social Movements And/In The Postcolonial: Dispossession, Developmentand Resistance In The Global South Nottingham University, UK June 24-5 2008]

The problem at the heart of this paper is the fact that a great deal of political action in recent years does not conform to the conceptual notions found across a variety of fields including global governance theory, international relations, social movement theory, and marxian and postmarxist approaches. Such activity includes the proliferation of direct action, affinity groups, and experiments with 'horizontal politics.'27 The primary categories which these activities challenge are (collective) identity, organisational structure, leadership, and agenda—either for reform or revolution. For example, there is no question that the global protests or social fora of the last decade represent some sort of agenda since both often involve formal demands of some kind, such as the recent publication of the nine general objectives for the World Social Forum (WSF) 2007 or protestors calling for the abolition of the World Trade Organization. However, there are aspects of contemporary political practice and protest that are seemingly without demand, without contention. For example, a significant voice within the WSF 'movement'—both participants and theorist—call for the retention of absolutely horizontal relations (Patomaki and Teivainen 2004:l46, Robinson and Tormey 2005:2l8) meaning no hierarchical system, manifesto of demands, or collective identity. Moreover, much of the activity at mass protests over the last decade has been concentrated on what might be termed constructing 'alternative subjectivities' and social spaces, rather than a struggle over power.28 In short, both in the case of social fora and global protest as well as innumerable and perhaps more significant regional and local initiatives and innovations, power is not necessarily the goal, and moreover there is a lack of collective identity or any over-arching framing of events through which meaningful aims could be constructed. It is these aspects which are putatively new and for which traditional social movement and political theory have difficulty accounting.

#### Turns case: identity politics is why performance debaters remain segregated into race, gender, sexuality, other camps.

Van Eijk 08 (T.J.K., Masters candidate @ Utrech University Gender Studies dep, “Diversity Management and Otherness-Politics: Organising (with) Difference How a theoretical thinking about diversity can make a difference in addressing policies and actions” pg. 37 June 12)

Identity politics, as the label suggests, centres on the idea of authentic, fixed identities. This is its strength because by narrowing the purview of emancipation it can set realistic goals. Therein, however,also lies the problem. Identity politics is in a position of impossibility to consider multiple subject positions as it centralises certain forms of being the standard of something. For example, first wave feminism has been accused of heterosexism and indifference to ethnicity. Both lesbian and black women blame early feminism that their idea of ‘a woman’ was the white middle class woman with no attention toward the differences among women. In addressing this critique, Butler points out that the list of adjectives referring to different social groups, colour, sexuality, ethnicity, class and ablebodiedness invariably closes with an embarrassed ‘etc.’ at the end of the list. It is through this horizontal trajectory of adjectives that one strives to encompass a situated subject, but invariably fails to be complete. It is this inability to treat multiple subject positions, the inability to attend to more than one specific subject at a time, which has come to be an important critique of identity politics. Identity politics fails to recognise the interactions among different characterisations and the possibilities of different identities within the same social category.

#### Thus the alt is to vote negative in favor of rejecting the affirmative’s static conception of identity and reconfiguring a figure of viscosity.

Saldanha 06 [Arun Saldanha Department of Geography, University of Minnesota, edia Studies at the Free University of Brussels, Belgium I finished my PhD at the Open University in the U.K. Reontologising race: the machinic geography of phenotype Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 2006, volume 24, pages 9 ^ 24 Online]

There is an explicit or implicit notion of space imbricated in any ontology. Thus,Doreen Massey has consistently attacked the static, nonrelational conception of space of the modern masculine tradition (Massey, 2005). But neither is the spatiality Massey defends one of pure flux, in which there are no `points' (compare Doel, 1998). What is needed is a concept of space in which fixity can emerge from flux under certain conditions. This is different from saying that there is perpetual vacillation at infinite speed between two poles, fixity and flow, like in some postmodern dialectic or like Derridean undecidability, even if the poles are effects of the vacillation. Real process is not vacillary; it is irreversible and messy. To evoke the continuous but constrained dynamism of space, I want to propose the figure of viscosity. Neither perfectly fluid nor solid, the viscous invokes surface tension and resistance to perturbation and mixing. Viscosity means that the physical characteristics of a substance explain its unique movements. There are local and temporary thickenings of interacting bodies,which then collectively become sticky, capable of capturing more bodies like them: an emergent slime mold. Under certain circumstances, the collectivity dissolves, the con-stituent bodies flowing freely again. The world is an immense mass of viscosities,becoming thicker here, and thinner there. In Genesis, Michel Serres tries to understand emergence, how unity can emerge from the background noise of multiplicity. At one point he writes of the ``chain of contingency'':``No, the contingent chain does not break, its links slide over one another, as though viscous. They touch because they are adjacent, they touch like sailors' hitches or the loops of motorway clover leaves are stacked upon one another. It is not a linkage, but a local pull, by way of little frictions. The local pull induces global movement very seldom, although it can happen. This is not a solid chain, it is simply a liquid movement,a viscosity, a propagation that wagers its age in each locality'' ([1982] 1995, page 71,his italics).Race must similarly be conceived as a chain of contingency, in which the connections between its constituent components are not given, but are made viscous through local attractions. Whiteness, for example, is about the sticky connections between property, privilege, and a paler skin. There is no essence of whiteness, but there is a relative fixity that inheres in all the `local pulls' of its many elements in flux. Emergence and viscosity are complementary concepts, the first pertaining to the genesis of distinctions, the second to the modality of that genesis. Race's spatiality is emphatically not about discrete separations between `races'. Nobody `has' a race, but bodies are racialised. Gilroy asks: ``if `race' is a useful way of classifying people, then how many `races' are there?'' (2000, page 37). This question betrays a logic of solids and grids. The concept of race is not for taxonomic ordering,but for studying the movements between human bodies, things, and their changing environment. The concept of race is like the concept of subculture, or disease nobody wants to know how many subcultures or diseases there are, but how they come to be. What are the constituent components of race? Potentially everything, but certainly strands of DNA, phenotypical variation, discursive practices (law, media, science), artefacts such as clothes and food, and the distribution of wealth. How these are connected is entirely immanent to the way certain humans behave in certain circumstances. Sarah Whatmore (2002) might call race intrinsically more-than-human, irreducible to either biology or culture. Deleuze and Guattari'sA Thousand Plateaus can be understood as a conceptualisation of irreducible and immanent heterogeneities like race (though they do not explicitly confirm that race is such a heterogeneity). They call these heterogeneities machinic assemblages.``Taking the feudal assemblage as an example, we would have to consider the inter-minglings of bodies defining feudalism: the body of the earth and the social body;the body of the overlord, the vassal, the serf; the body of the knight and the horseand their new relation to the stirrup; the weapons and tools assuring a symbiosis ofbodiesˆa whole machinic assemblage. We would also have to consider statements,expressions, the juridical regime of heraldry, all of the incorporeal transformations,in particular, oaths and their variables (the oath of obedience, but also the oath of love, etc.): the collective assemblage of enunciation. On the other axis, we wouldh ave to consider the feudal territorialities and reterritorializations, and at the same time the line of deterritorialization that carries away both the knight and his mount, statements and acts. We would have to consider how all this combines in the Crusades'' (Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, page 89).A machinic geography of bodies asks what immanent connections they forge with things and places, how they work, travel, fight, write, love, how these bodies become viscous, slow down, get into certain habits, into certain collectivities, like city, social stratum, or racial formation. Machinism is wary of mediation: it prefers connections and viscosities. Machinis masks how incredibly diverse processes (such as agriculture and sexuality, religion and property law) interlock, like cogs and wheels instead of signifiers and signifieds. But machinism is not physicalism. It understands entities not as perfectly knowable cause^effect sequences, but as bundles of virtual capacities. Approaching phenotype machinically means being prepared for the unpreparable: phenotype connects ininfinite ways. Living, social machines are not machines in the narrow sense, because they lack a preconceived `function' and are constantly evolving. A quick return to Fanon to elucidate the machinic assemblage of race. Another well-known quote:``The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, oflight. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire. It is a town of niggers and dirty arabs. The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dreams of possessionˆall manner of possession: to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed, with his wife if possible. The colonized man is an envious man. And this the settler knows very well; when their glances meet he ascertains bitterly,always on the defensive `They want to take our place'. It is true, for there is nonative who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler's place'' ([1961] 1967, page 30) Numerous authors have theorised about the intersection of possession, sexuality, urbanism and race (for example Low, 1996). The machinic geography of phenotype,however, takes issue with the Hegelian self/other scheme that supports much of thi swork, and studies instead how certain bodies stick to certain spaces, how they arechained by hunger, cold, darkness, mud, poverty, crime, glances full of envy and anxiety. The segregation between colonists and colonised is the apparently binary result of many nitty-gritty material processes which, when analysed, render it a lot less binary. This also means race is devious in inventing new ways of chaining bodies. Race is creative, constantly morphing, now disguised as sexual desire, now aslamission civilatrice, all the while weaving new elements in its wake. Deleuze and Guattari might say that what defines race is not rigidity or inevitability, but its ``lines of flight''. Race can be as stark as apartheid, but mostly it is fuzzy and operates through something else.The social sciences literature on race (urban geography, postcolonial theory, filmstudies) remains relevant from the machinic perspective. Race is shown to exist through ghettoes, travel writing, and Hollywood cinema. What this literature shows is precisely race's plastic, emergent, and more-than-human spatiality (for example,Anderson, 1991; hooks, 1992; Jackson and Penrose, 1993; Jacobs, 1996; Robinson,1996). Still, more geographical and anthropological work needs to be done to theorisethe biocultural imbrications of race. For example, in the introduction to the collection Race, Nature and the Politics of Difference it is argued that``both race and nature are historical artefacts: assemblages of material, discourse,and practice irreducible to a single timeless essence. By charting the ways in which race and nature work together, and by tracing key disruptions in their busy traffic,we emphasize the cultural labors required to maintain them as they are. ... We write against racismsˆnot against `race' but against the exclusionary effects pro-duced through its invocation, deployment, and reproduction'' (Moore et al, 2003,page 42).But the full implications of the term assemblageˆthat it includes biological and othernon human forcesˆstill need to be explored. There is some work being done thatquietly disrespects the disciplinary boundaries of modern epistemology. Anthropolog-ically inclined medical research has the potential to offer a critical approach to the biocultural aspects of racial division (Wade, 2002, pages 117^122). Luca Cavalli-Sforzamaps human migration using genetics and physical anthropology as well as archae-ology, linguistics, and history (Cavalli-Sforza et al, 1994). This research deserves theoretical attention, so that more rigorous studies of the discursive, technological,and economic embeddedness of phenotype can be imagined. Zack (2002) has recently argued that physical anthropology can only account for variation through heredity, not the folk (taxonomic) conception of race as such. She therefore continues to define `race' as an essentialist social construction which has no basis in the science ofphenotype. What is needed, however, is to highjack the folk conception and rethink race as culturally embedded phenotype. Saying that race has no basis in biology is different from saying that phenotype plays some role in racial differentiation. Pheno-type is a crucial element in the assemblage called race, and, because phenotype is already nondiscrete and shaped by culture, race cannot be an essentialist concept. Now, what does this nonessentialism mean to antiracist politics? Every time phenotype makes another machinic connection, there is a stutter. Everytime bodies are further entrenched in segregation, however brutal, there needs to be anaffective investment of some sort. This is the ruptural moment in which to intervene. Race should not be eliminated, but proliferated, its many energies directed at multiplyingracial differences so as to render them joyfully cacophonic. Many in American critical race theory also argue against a utopian transcendence of race, taking from W E BDu Bois and pragmatism a reflexive, sometimes strategically nationalist attitude towards racial embodiment (compare Outlaw, 1996; Shuford, 2001; Winant, 2004).What is needed is an affirmation of race's creativity and virtuality: what race can be. Race need not be about order and oppression, it can be wild, far-from-equilibrium,liberatory. It is not that everyone becomes completely Brownian (or brown!), completely similar, or completely unique. It is just that white supremacism becomes strenuous as many populations start harbouring a similar economic, technological,cultural productivity as whites do now, linking all sorts of bodies with all sorts of wealth and all sorts of ways of life. That is, race exists in its true mode when it is no longer stifled by racism.``The race-tribe exists only at the level of an oppressed race, and in the name of the oppression it suffers; there is no race but inferior, minoritarian; there is no domi-nant race; a race is defined not by its purity but rather by the impurity conferred upon it by a system of domination. Bastard and mixed-blood are the true names ofrace'' (Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, page 379).In ``A thousand tiny sexes'', Grosz (1994b) follows a well-known passage of Deleuzeand Guattari to argue for non-Hegelian, indeed protohuman feminism that utiliseslines of flight of the gender assemblage to combat heterosexist patriarchy.``If we consider the great binary aggregates, such as the sexes or classes, it is evident that they also cross over into molecular assemblages of a different nature, and that there is a double reciprocal dependency between them. For the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant, etc.: a thousand tiny sexes'' (Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, page 213).Similarly, the molecularisation of race would consist in its breaking up into a thousand tiny races. It is from here that cosmopolitanism should start: the pleasure,curiosity, and concern in encountering a multiplicity of corporeal fragments outside of common-sense taxonomies.``We walk the streets among hundreds of people whose patterns of lips, breasts, andgenital organs we divine; they seem to us equivalent and interchangeable. Then something snares our attention: a dimple speckled with freckles on the cheek of a woman; a steel choker around the throat of a man in a business suit; a gold ring inthe punctured nipple on the hard chest of a deliveryman; a big raw fist in the delicate hand of a schoolgirl; a live python coiled about the neck of a lean, lankyadolescent with coal-black skin. Signs of clandestine disorder in the uniformed andcoded crowds'' (Lingis, 2000, page 142).Machinism against racism builds upon a gradual, fragmented, and shifting sense ofc orporeal difference, that of course extends far further than the street. Responsibility,activism, and antiracist policy will follow only from feeling and understanding the geographical differentials that exist between many different kinds of bodies: betweena Jew and a black soldier, between a woman in the Sahel and a woman in Wall Street,between a Peruvian peasant and a Chinese journalist. A machinic politics of race takesinto account the real barriers to mobility and imagination that exist in different places;cosmopolitanism has to be invented, not imposed. It may seem that machinism is as utopian and open ended as Gilroy's transcendentantiracism. It is not, because it is empirical, immanent, and pragmatic. The machinicgeography of phenotype shows that racism differs from place to place, and cannot be overcome in any simple way. It shows that white supremacy can subside only by changing the rules of education, or the financial sector, or the arms trade, or thepharmaceutical industry, or whatever. For machinic politics, the cultural studies pre-occupations with apology, recognition, politically correct language and reconsiliation,or else cultural hybridity, pastiche, and ambivalence, threaten to stand in the way of really doing something about the global structures of racism. A thousand tiny races can be made only if it is acknowledged that racism is a material, inclusive series of events, a viscous geography which cannot be `signified away'. Miscegenation, openness to strangers, exoticism in art, and experimentations with whiteness can certainly help. But ultimately cosmpolitanism without critique and intervention remains complacent with its own comfortably mobile position. In a word, ethics encompasses politics, and politics starts with convincing people of race's materiality. With racism enduring every well-meant attack (it's arbitrary! it's arbitrary!), it seems crucial for the humanities and social sciences to start engaging with the reality of phenotypeˆphenotype itself, unmediated, in all of its connective glory. Following recent turns towards embodiment and materiality, the mediation model as endorsed by Butler and many in race and ethnic studies becomes inadequate to understand processes of racialisation. Race is not only a problem of how people think about skin colour.We need to know what race really is, that is, what it can be. Deontologising race, as Gilroy wishes to do, even if possible, seems a bad option if all the ontological questions are left to reductionist sociobiologists and far-right politicians to answer. As Haraway's writings attest, social scientists and cultural theorists cannot let multinationals and the sensationalist science press `do' all the biology. There is simply to omuch at stake to continue brushing aside the biological as `discursive practice'.Haraway's project, like Latour's, nonetheless remains too epistemological (science studies). With the profusion of popular science books and television programmes on`human nature', and this in conjunction with growing xenophobia, the public sphere is craving for critical social science interventions addressing these issues, not as material^semiotic constructions, but as debatable empirical, political and philosophical findings.Race is completely contingent, but not arbitrary: in hindsight, its differentiations and inequalities can be explained (Winant, 2004). A process such as race clearly cannot be studied with classical notions of identity, causality, cogito, representation, and reducibility. As a configuration made viscous by a whole host of processes, race requires genetics and ethnography and economics and literary theory to be understood. And a critical dialogue between the humanities and the physical sciences will be greatly facilitated by the nonmodern ontology of complexity theory. I discussed several entry points into such a pluralist ontological understanding ofrace. One is the phenomenology of race, provided it keeps the focus on embodied,social interaction, in which an ethics of responsibility follows from sensing the inten-sities between oneself and others, however distant. Another is the political appraisal of difference in corporeal feminism. Anthropology is a third entry point, at least if eased from the epistemological and imperialist straightjackets of modernity. Biology, as inaugurated by Darwin, is a contextual and nuanced way of understanding the intrinsic vitality of matter. Deleuze's metaphysics of difference and repetition, finally, gives philosophical valence to the scientific project of understanding the emergence of race and the political project of striving for the freedom of more bodies. Race shows the openness of the body, the way organisms connect to their environ-ment and establish uneven relationships amongst each other. The creativity of nature is not good in itself, but it can be made good. The molecular energies of race can be sensed, understood, and harnessed to crumble the systemic violence currently keeping bodies in place. Hoping for, striving for a thousand tiny races is not annihilating nature from culture, but on the contrary, immersing oneself in nature's lines of flight.This politics is also not mystical or anarchistic, it is pragmatic and includes state policy as well as what Deleuze and Guattari call micropolitics. It is first of all empirical:understand what race is, know its potentialities, try to sense them hiding around you,find out what is keeping them from becoming actual.

## Links

### fem

#### Deleuzian thought solves feminism.

Colebrook 2002 (Claire, Understanding Deleuze) Page xxxix-xl

Feminists have also seen the work of Deleuze as helpful in thinking beyond the closed questions of humanism. Often, movements like feminism are divided over the question of whether to include women within humanity, arguing that we are all equal, or to argue for women’s essential difference. The feminisms that followed existentialism and phenomenology, such as the work of Simone de Beauvoir (1908–86), argued that women were ‘Other’: always defined in opposition to, or as negations of man (Beauvoir 1969). Deleuze-inspired feminists have challenged this negative account by insisting that the images of both men and women are the result of prehuman and micropolitical productions; both are produced through a multiplicity of relations and connections, with neither grounding or preceding the other. One of the famous phrases from *A Thousand Plateaus*, ‘a thousand tiny sexes’, has been taken up by writers like Elizabeth Grosz, who sees the unified human body as the effect of processes of desire and becoming (Grosz 1994a). Against existentialism and phenomenology, Deleuze argued that whatever image we have of ourselves, we are affected by forces that lie beyond our active decision. Freedom needs to be redefined, not as the isolated decision of self-present human agents, but as the power to affirm all those powers beyond ourselves, which only an expanded perception can approach.

#### Feminist critique fails because of its ground in identity – rather we must focus on alternating intensity in order to create the positive difference.

Colebrook 2002 (Claire, Understanding Deleuze) Page 45

By contrast, Deleuze produces a politics of desire. Intensities may not be meaningful, but they are no less political; it is not the message that we consume in culture but the investment in intensities. Society is ordered not by the imposition of meanings but by the production of styles Deleuze argues for a ‘micropolitics’—how do specific qualities such as whiteness, softness, curvaceousness— signs of a desire that is singular and impersonal—come to be coded as signs of ‘the feminine’? We have femininity not because we have imposed difference but because we have abstracted certain qualities and taken them as signifiers. The problem comes when desired intensities—such as the image of Monroe—are taken to be a signifier for woman in general; this is how the ‘social machine’, according to Deleuze, ‘overcodes’ desire. It reduces intensive difference— the investment in impersonal qualities such as blondeness, curvaceousness, vulnerability—to extensive difference—the investment in ‘woman’ or ‘femininity’. We can look at Andy Warhol’s repetition of Monroe’s image in relation to this reduction of intensive difference. Warhol’s art takes the signifiers of modern America—everything from Marilyn Monroe to Campbell’s soup tins—and repeats them as intensities. Monroe becomes a certain shape of lips and hair. The soup tin becomes the design-label, its colours, lettering and logo. The repetition of the image precludes us from seeing its uniqueness or being; we are given imaging and appearance itself. So that it is not that we have identities such as femininity or American home-life that we then signify through images—there is no ‘woman’ or ‘America’ other than the proliferation of intensities. Identity occurs with the reduction of intensities to a signifier, when we imagine the intensity as the image of something—when we think our love of apple pie signifies our Americanness. The reverse is the case; identities are formed from desires, such as investments in colours, body-parts, tastes and styles. Desire is originally productive, connective and intensive, the investment in qualities that are neither masculine nor feminine but singular. Through repetition and coding these qualities are read as signifiers of some individual essence that precedes and governs the intensities.

### Ableism

#### Their focus on disability focuses on the biological disability – this reifies a mind-body split that prevents our alternative

Kuppers 05[Petra. Department of English, University of Michigan. University  Focusing on poststructuralist theory, especially Deleuze and Guattari. http://www.nonsitecollective.org/system/files/rhizomatic%20model%20of%20disability%20article%203.3.kuppers.pdf]

Disability is the realm I traverse with a strong sense of the haptic, the touching of concepts and bodies. Disability is a slippery word that holds nightshade and sunlight, a concept that grows above ground, in our disability culture politics, and below, in the privacy of the disarticulation of pain, of isolation, of the lived reality of social and physical oppression: Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order. … [N]ot every trait in a rhizome is necessarily linked to a linguistic feature: semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.) that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status. (Deleuze and Guattari, Plateaus, 7) One of the central struggles in Disability Studies concerns models of disability, a somewhat fixed generic form by now, and much discussed in the Social Science and Humanities literature on disability. In these models, disability activism and, later, Disability Studies, plumb the meaning of the word disability, and put it into play with the way that disability is culturally and socially grasped. In the social model, disability is a category that is extrinsic to specific bodily being: a wheelchair user becomes disabled when she encounters a stairwell. And she can embrace the label as a sign of shared oppression, identification across a social position. 6 In the medical model, disability is intrinsic: this body is disabled, faulty, in need of being (and potentially able to be) cured, managed, rehabilitated. I propose a rhizomatic model of disability, already a model, slanted, quotationed, rather than a mode of experience. This is a model in which the extrinsic and intrinsic mix and merge, as they do in my own physical and psychical being when I am in pain, and cannot walk up the stairs, and wish for a painkiller, and 6. The critiques of the social model are varied and provide an exciting impetus to much theoretical labor in Disability Studies. Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, for instance, critique the social model and its lack of attention to the lived experience of disability, and see the problems with taking the social model too far: “[i]n disability politics, and to a large extent in theory, that putative split between mind and body has been perpetuated to the extent that the body is seen simply as the focus of discriminatory practices on the part of wider society which limit the possibilities open to its owner” (67). Susan Wendell calls for a more nuanced approach in contemporary Disability Studies: “[k]nowing more about how people experience, live with, and think about their own impairments[,] could contribute to an appreciation of disability as a valuable difference from the medical norms of body and mind” (22).26 Petra Kuppers take pride in my difference (what other choice do I have?), and feel unable to speak of the nature of my discomfort, cannot find the words, but find comfort in the company of others whose pain might be different, but who somehow feel sympatico. The rhizomes in A Thousand Plateaus connect at any point of their surface, assemble into new life forms, run along the surface of the earth, and just beneath it, mixing below and above, refusing fixed differentiation (and of course, the schizoanalytic rhizome is not the biological rhizome, but neither is it ‘not it’: the two, concrete and abstract, are in productive tension). To me, in my life reality, thinking about my disability as a rhizomatic formation is useful and productive. And of course Deleuzoguattarian politics are specific, momentary, individual, and not-reproduceable. And yet I feel that there is currency in this rhizomatic model for more than just me and my personal imaginary. Without knowing what specific assemblages will emerge for any one reader-operator, a rhizomatic model allows the co-existence of “not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status” (Deleuze and Guattari, Plateaus, 7)— and that last part of the quote, things of differing status, resonates with my lived experience of disability as one that lives in a simultaneity of codes, devalued and valued at the same time. The rhizomatic model of disability produces an abundance of meanings that do not juxtapose pain and pleasure or pride and shame, but allow for an immanent transformation, a coming into being of a state of life in this world, one that is constantly shifting and productive of new subject/individual positions. But, like all Deleuzoguattarian concepts, this rhizomatic model of disability is only useful when used. It cannot have truth status, for it is empty of specific meaning. It is a movement rather than a definition.

### Race

#### Conceptualizing race through ideology, narrative, and discourse denies into phenotypic effect

Saldnha 6 (Aran, Dep of Geography @ U of Minnesota, “Reontologising race: the machinic geography of phenotype” pg. 11-12 Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 2006, volume 24, pages 91-24)

In contemporary theory, race tends to be conceived as a problem of language. We read that race is an ideology, a narrative, a discourse. Race then refers to the cultural representation of people, not to people themselves. It could be said that race tends to be approached as an epistemological problem: how is race known? Why was it invented? Some argue that we should simply stop thinking in terms of race. In this paper I would like to argue this might not be a good idea. Race will be approached ontologically, as a real process demanding particular concepts and commitments. Not so much representations, but bodies and physical events will be foregrounded. For instance, the phenotype of humans can be shown to play an active part in the event called race. When understood as immanent process, it becomes clear that, though contingent, race cannot be transcended, only understood and rearranged. Whether there is any physical basis for the concept of race has of course been hotly contested for many decades. In cultural studies, postcolonial theory, cultural anthropology, and most human geography, it is common to treat race as a discursive construct. Many in American critical race theory, such as Howard Winant and Naomi Zack, opt instead for a more realist approach, granting that there are phenotypical differences but that their social force depends on culture, economics, and the law. In this paper I chiefly follow poststructuralist philosophy not American left-wing prag­matism, but I do so in order to take issue with the epistemological bias in much of the humanities inspired by poststructuralism. Despite coming from a different intellectual trajectory, therefore, I would locate this intervention closer to the realist approach. The paper presents a number of entries into the argument. This theoretical eclecti­cism demonstrates that the materiality of race can be conceptualised from a number of perspectives, making the reconceptualisation very much due. First, Frantz Fanon's phenomenology of race is revisited, and I argue against Judith Butler's linguistic take on embodiment. Then the deontologisation of race in authors such as Paul Gilroy is scrutinised. Not asking properly what race is, Gilroy believes too easily in the possibility of its transcendence. In the fourth section, the refusal to engage with phenotype is with Bruno Latour shown to follow from a wider anxiety in the social sciences about matter. Nevertheless, in many places, as in the feminism of Elizabeth Grosz, materiality is again treated positively. As discussed in the fifth section, the openness of the human organism is also affirmed in anthropology—as well as in biology, from Darwin onwards. In particular, biology influenced by complexity theory and its philosophical under­pinning by Gilles Deleuze and Michel Serres can help in imagining the biocultural emergence and evolution of race relations. The last two sections follow Deleuze and Guattari and use their term **machine assemblage** to capture race's reality of unmediated connections. Far from being an arbitrary classification system imposed **upon** bodies, race is a nonnecessary and irre­ducible effect of the ways those bodies themselves interact with each other and their physical environment. The spatiality of race is not one of grids or self/other dialectics, but one of **viscosity,** bodies gradually becoming sticky and clustering into aggregates. Battling against racism is then not a question of denying race, but of cultivating its energies against the stickiness of racial segregation. Crucial in this process is that social scientists critically engage with race's biological aspect. For if they insist that race is but a 'social construction', they might leave the discursive arena open for (closet) racists to reinstate biological justifications for white privilege.